

CABINET

Wednesday, 16th October, 2019
Time of Commencement: 2.00 pm

Present:-	Councillor Simon Tagg – Chair
Councillors	S. Sweeney, M. Holland, P. Northcott and J Waring
Officers	David Adams, Caroline Elwood, Martin Hamilton, Jan Willis, Geoff Durham and Sarah Wilkes
Apologies	Councillor(s) T. Johnson

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor T Johnson.

The Leader and Cabinet members sent their best wishes to Councillor Johnson and wished for a speedy recovery.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September, 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg raised the issue of how a Cabinet member was treated at a recent meeting of an outside body. He commented that even though meetings were often politically charged events, Councillors must show respect for each other at all times.

4. DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020/21 - 2024/25

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking endorsement of the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Stephen Sweeney advised that this was a rolling programme and was the framework for the annual budget process and gave an insight into how the Council works.

One of the key features was the Borough Growth Fund which would now be in the budget every year.

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg stated that this was the second year of the Efficiency Board process which involved a good look at the finances of the Council and also showed where efficiencies could be made.

The draft Strategy would be referred to the Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for review.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 – 2024/25 be endorsed as a basis for consultation.
 - (ii) That the draft Strategy be referred to the Finance, Resources and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for review and comments.

5. COMMERCIAL STRATEGY 2019/24

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval of the Commercial Strategy.

This was a new Strategy for the Council which provides a framework for the Council's commercial activity. A copy of the Strategy was appended to the report.

The Strategy would be reviewed by the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee in December.

Members were advised that a new Director of Regeneration and Commercialisation had been appointed and would be starting in early 2020.

Members welcomed the report stating that it was a change of impetus for the Council – going in a new direction. It would also help in the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the draft Commercial Strategy be approved.
 - (ii) That the Constitution Working Group be requested to consider any changes that may be required to the Council's Constitution in light of the strategy, including schemes of delegation and finance procedure rules, for approval by full Council.
 - (iii) That the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee review and comment on the strategy at its December meeting;
 - (iv) That commercial investment advisers be appointed to undertake a review of the Council's commercial property portfolio and make recommendations for investment or disinvestment (this contract is currently out to tender with an expected award by the end of October 2019);
 - (v) That officers to work up investment proposals for further consideration by Cabinet.

6. KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE UPDATE

A report was submitted to Cabinet updating Members on the re-opening of Kidsgrove Sports Centre.

The Leader welcomed Mr Dave Rigby from the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Community Group.

The building would need to be made safe and watertight and the services reconnecting.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3 of the report which outlined the alternative options with Option A at paragraph 3.2 being the preferred solution.

The transferring of ownership of the building from Staffordshire County Council to Newcastle Borough Council was currently ongoing. The County Council would also pay a sum of money equal to the demolition costs.

The Leader stated that an all –party Cabinet Panel would be convened which could comprise of all of the Kidsgrove Ward Councillors, the Leader, plus representatives from the Liberal Democratic Group and the Borough Independent Group.

The first phase would be to reopen the Centre's dry side followed by the swimming pool.

Members all agreed that this was excellent news and partnership working at its best.

The Leader thanked officers, the Community Group and Members for the work that would be done on this which would become a facility that Kidsgrove could be proud of.

The Leader advised that a community engagement event would be taking place on the morning of 19 October at Tesco in Kidsgrove where the plans could be examined and people could share their views.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Council's commitment to sports & swimming provision in Kidsgrove be reaffirmed.
 - (ii) That the re-opening of the sports centre as the vehicle for delivery of this commitment be agreed.
 - (iii) That it be agreed in principle to support option A for the reasons set out at paragraph 3.2 subject to:
 - a) Validation and confirmation of full cost estimates for refurbishment of the sports centre;
 - b) Satisfactory assurances that following refurbishment the building will have a life expectancy that justifies the required level of investment from the perspective of both affordability and value for money;
 - c) Submission and validation of an updated business plan that includes full lifecycle costs and confirms the level of annual subsidy required;
 - d) Resolution of the outstanding legal issues detailed at paragraph 2.1;
 - e) The CIO strengthening its capacity and governance to enable the project to be delivered and associated

public funds safeguarded

- (iv) That an all-party Cabinet panel be convened to consider the revised cost estimates and business plan with a view to Cabinet making a recommendation to Council on reopening the existing Kidsgrove Sport Centre.

7. CAR PARKING STRATEGY

A report was submitted to Cabinet outlining the draft Car Parking Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency thanked officers for the work that had been put into this ten year strategy.

A copy of the Strategy was appended to the report. The Strategy had been considered by the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee in September, 2019

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.2 of the report which highlighted the key objectives. Councillor Sweeney referred to Objectives 1 to 3 and reference was made to the provision of charging points for electric cars which currently is only offered locally at Keele Services.

The Leader stated that the Council now had a plan for car parking to take forward.

Members welcomed the Strategy and agreed that marketing the changes was important to let the people know.

The Leader stated that the BID had yet to make a decision on the proposal for the Goose Street car park to be a dedicated "Shoppers Carpark" but the general feeling was that the BID and businesses were in favour.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Car Parking Strategy be endorsed, taking into account the issues highlighted by the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee.
 - (ii) That officers commence consultation on the draft Car Parking Strategy with the Town Centre Board and Business Improvement District.
 - (iii) That the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency be authorised to adopt the final strategy following amendments taking into account consultation comments.
 - (iv) That officers be authorised to introduce the £1 after 1pm in time for the Christmas Light Switch on with a review of the effectiveness after 8 months of operation.

8. AIR QUALITY LOCAL PLAN CONTRACTS

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval of the extension to an award of contract for the Air Quality Local Plan Technical Consultant work and to approve the award of contract for the air quality project manager.

The Leader introduced the report on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling. The contracts were necessary as specialist knowledge was required in order to identify a preferred option.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, Councillor Sweeney advised that the top of Basford bank was an issue but it could be controlled to an extent by cutting back the leaves on trees and by altering the traffic light sequence.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Chief Executive be authorised (and inform the Cabinet Member for Environment and Recycling) to extend the existing contract for the technical consultancy support for the air quality local plan and the contract for the provision of the joint air quality project manager to meet Ministerial Direction relating to Air Quality.
 - (ii) That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Recycling) for any further extension to the existing contracts for the technical consultancy support or project manager in order to meet the requirements of the Ministerial Direction in relation to Air Quality.

9. **BEDDING PLANT CONTRACT**

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking approval for the future procurement of spring and summer bedding plans, hanging baskets and troughs for the Council's floral displays.

The Leader introduced the report on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling, Councillor Trevor Johnson.

The Executive Director for Operations, Dave Adams pointed out a typing error in the report under 'Reasons' which read March 2020. The date in the 'Recommendation', March 2023 was correct.

Councillor Holland referred to the award winning displays in the town and that last week, Newcastle had celebrated the Blue Band Award.

Members asked Dave Adams to pass on thanks to everyone involved with the displays.

- Resolved:** That the Head of Operations be authorised to undertake an open procurement exercise for the provision of bedding plants on a three year contract extendable by single one year extension up to March 2023 commencing November 2019 and following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, accept the most economically advantageous tender within the existing approved budget provision.

10. **DIGITAL STRATEGY - FINAL OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE**

A report was submitted to Cabinet providing an overview of the final Outline Business Case that underpins the digital strategy that was considered by Cabinet on 4 September, 2019.

The Outline Business Case had been considered by the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 19 September, 2019 and their views are reflected in the document appended to the report.

Members were pleased with the document and stated that it also captured those who were not up to date with digital delivery.

Resolved: That the final Outline Business Case be approved.

11. ROUGH SLEEPERS INITIATIVE

A report was submitted to Cabinet seeking support for the re-provision and recommissioning of a joint Rough Sleeper's Outreach Service with Stoke on Trent City Council from April 2020.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, Councillor Jill Waring stated that the Service had been the main force of keeping the number of rough sleepers at low levels on the streets of Newcastle.

Members endorsed the report stating that it was an important service to provide.

The Leader added that the Police also fully supported the service which was helping vulnerable members of society.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That it be agreed to support the joint commissioning of a future rough sleeping outreach service with Stoke on Trent City Council that combines both Councils' resources and develop a service which meets the needs of both authority areas whilst maximising efficiencies.
 - (ii) That the Council's annual budget contribution to the service be set at £20,000, enabling potential service providers to tender for an appropriate service.
 - (iii) That the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing be authorised in partnership with Stoke City Council's procurement function to finalise the specification/service outline, undertake the tendering process, complete any post tender negotiations (if required) and award the contract to the successful contractor.

12. ARMED FORCES COVENANT - SPORT AND LEISURE CARD

A report was submitted to Cabinet to consider the introduction of a discount card for the armed forces to use at Jubilee2.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage, Councillor Mark Holland Stated that it was this was a sensible and useful charge to introduce at Jubilee2 and was mindful of the obligations of the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Leader advised that this would not be giving participants 'special treatment' but would be one of several concessions which are offered to various users of the facilities.

Resolved: That the armed forces discount card scheme be agreed.

13. **FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND**

A report was submitted to Cabinet which outlined the Council's success in progressing the Future High Streets Fund to Business Case Development Phase and to agree the procurement of external support to complete this business case.

The Leader stated that the bid for Newcastle Town Centre had been submitted based on increasing void rates for empty commercial units and the opportunity presented by the Ryecroft site.

In order to progress, a top class Business Case was required and therefore consultancy support was required as there were no 'in-house' experienced staff for this project.

Members were pleased that Newcastle had made it through to the next stage.

The Leader made reference to the Call-in waiver on this item stating that this was urgent as there was a strict time scale to adhere to in order to progress.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the Executive Director (Resources and Support Services) in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency be authorised to procure consultancy support for the development of the Business Case for the next stage of the Future High Streets Fund project.
 - (ii) That Cabinet consider a report on the Business Case before submission on 30th April 2020.
 - (iii) That the call in procedure shall not apply as the decision being taken by cabinet is urgent and the delay caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or public's interests. (A signed copy of the waiver notice is held on file and an unsigned copy is appended to the report).

14. **EXPERIENCE NEWCASTLE-NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE GROWTH PLAN**

A report was submitted to Cabinet presenting, for adoption the prospectus for economic growth in Newcastle town centre.

The Leader stated that the document which was attached to the report, outlined projects and schemes that were underway and pulled together various activities. The document was a 'good news' story for the town centre.

The Leader added that this was a two town Borough and the council needed to look at ways of taking this forward in Kidsgrove as well as Newcastle's town centre.

Members felt that the prospectus would go some way in persuading people to visit.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the prospectus attached at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
 - (ii) That the approved prospectus be used as a tool to engage stakeholders in, and promote, the town centre growth agenda.

15. **FORWARD PLAN**

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be received.

16. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR SIMON TAGG
Chair

Meeting concluded at 3.15 pm